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TO CREATE A DESIRE FOR CHANGE

A group of social scientists and educators working at the Bethel, Maine conferences on "Group Dynamics" have identified certain skills and understandings which they believe are necessary to group leaders who are trying to get people to change their customary ways of thinking, acting, or feeling. These skills and understandings have been summarized under three problem areas, as follows:

1. Helping a group become aware of the need for change.
 - a. Determine how sensitive people are to a need for change - how satisfied are they with things as they are?
 - b. Diagnose causes rather than pass judgments, find out why things are as they are without trying to pin fault on anyone. Ask what causes rather than who causes.
 - c. Create awareness of the need for considering change through:
 - Shock.
 - Permissiveness.
 - Demonstration.
 - Research or fact finding.
 - d. Raise the level of aspiration of people and make aspirations realistic - give people an experience that shows there is something better and that it is possible for them.
 - e. Create insight into the potentialities of change --help people to realize what will be the various possibilities of, and the resultant values from change.
 - f. Create the understanding of a step-by-step plan for change and patience in its use--realize that change is evolutionary.
 - g. Create insight into possible sources of help in this change.
 - h. Create a feeling of responsibility to engage in this change by active participation--providing some way for each one to commit himself to change.

Adapted by Mary L. Collings, Personnel Training Branch, Federal Extension Service, from concepts developed at Bethel conferences on Group Dynamics.

2. Helping a group (a) make a decision and (b) plan action for change.

- a. Consider alternative changes--avoid putting matters to vote.
- b. Examine the consequences of certain possible decisions.
- c. Arrive at a group decision.
- d. Set objectives or goals in a manner that suggests methods to arrive at them.
- e. Make a step-by-step plan of action involving each member of the group.
- f. Practice the carrying out of the plan.
- g. At later stages, assess results and replan.

3. Helping a group carry out their plan successfully and productively.

- a. Build and maintain morale of the group as they try to change--notice successes, avoid too great emphasis on defects.
- b. Understand the effects of stress and strain on the group's behavior--the causes of inefficient group action--do not fix blame on individuals.
- c. Create responsibility of the group for aiding all members to participate at their best level.
- d. Develop appreciation by others of work of those who need support as well as those who are effective members of the group.



